

2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Findhorn-Talk-Retreat-in-Scotland

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 1:12)

The Fyndhorn Foundation in the north of Scotland is a center of spiritual service in co-creation with nature, which emphasizes education and community. The Fyndhorn Foundation is at the heart of one of the best known intentional communities in the world, and is a major international center of adult educational, personal and spiritual transformation. About 14,000 visitors a year come to the Foundation in one of the many ways that it is possible to visit, live and work there.

Eckhart Tolle gave a weekend retreat in the Universal Hall to a group of over 300 people. This is a record of that event.

[Speaker 1] (2:35 - 38:21)

Welcome to our weekend retreat at this beautiful, sacred place. Our theme for this weekend is stillness, which is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. One could say everybody is still already.

The stillness is already there, it does not need to be found even. Certainly it does not need to be created, because it's already there. The only thing is, you may not notice it.

If there's a lot of mental noise, then you just don't notice it, but it's there. And also you don't notice the dimension within yourself that is far deeper than the movement of thought. And your whole identity is then bound up with the movement of thought.

A mind-created sense of self. A personal history and no more. That is soon coming to an end.

Soon, next year or in 40, 50 years time, it's soon. So who you are and stillness are one and the same. And if you have not yet gone completely mad in this mad world, that means you have some access to the stillness inside you.

You may not remember it afterwards because it's not memorable, since stillness is timeless. And the mind cannot memorize it or think, oh that was interesting, I'll remember that. Because stillness is not interesting.

Interesting is a mental thing. Just as our weekend here is not going to be interesting. You may have noticed that already.

But interesting is not the ultimate. It's only the ultimate to the human mind. You can go out here and look at a tree.

Or a flower. Or the sunset. Or a sunset.

And could you say, this sunset is interesting? Only if you were trying to write a PhD about sunsets. If you had to analyze it.

Or the oak tree. The oak tree becomes interesting the moment you start to analyze it mentally. And there is a place for that also in this dimension.

But if you get caught up on that dimension only, where you break things up into little bits and pieces and analyze them. And by the way, most kinds of analysis, you have to kill the thing first before you can analyze it. Or in the process of analysis it gets killed.

But if you just be with the oak tree, contemplate it, truly look. Then what you're looking at goes beyond interesting. It's far deeper than interesting.

Same as the sunset. There's nothing interesting about it. And yet it is awe-inspiring.

It is deep. There's a depth there that defies analysis by the mind. The moment you analyze it, you have reduced it to something lifeless.

And most people in our civilization, and this has been going on for a long time, are trapped in that dimension where compulsively they go about their life analyzing, interpreting, and labeling things as soon as they enter their field of consciousness. They do it to people. They do it to situations that they encounter.

Immediately have some personal reactive relationship to it. They do it to nature. And they can no longer perceive the sacredness that is there in nature because they approach it only through thinking.

And that is a dreadful prison that you then end up in. The prison of your own mind. And then you approach your whole life only through that.

And your whole life becomes reduced to a conceptual reality in the head consisting of thoughts that you have about things. Viewpoints, opinions, and even so-called knowledge. Knowledge is a thought, a label, and gives the illusion that you know.

And all it is, it's a thought that you have put on something. And then it loses its depth and aliveness. And you begin to relate to reality through the veil of thinking.

And you relate to yourself through the veil of thinking because you yourself become a conceptual thought-based entity an egoic self, a me, with its unfulfilled personal history its desires and fears and frustrations and its hopes that it will find ultimate fulfillment of its unfulfilled and unfulfilling sense of self based on the story in the future. Which again is the thought form. That's what the future is.

Nobody has ever encountered it except as a thought. And yet most people live unconsciously as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment. The only thing there ever is.

This one moment that you could never escape from have never escaped from, will never escape from that is inseparable from the life that you are also inseparable from stillness because the moment you enter the now with your attention a stillness arises. The essence of the present moment no matter how mad it may appear on the surface is always stillness. It is also sacredness.

The only place where the sacred dimension can be found is now. You have to be present to this moment. You have to wake up into this moment to realize that life is sacred.

When you are lost in thought sacred is meaningless. It could become another of the many concepts that you can play with and you could write a PhD about it without ever having encountered it yourself. So this, the depth of now is inseparable from your very being, your very life and it is a sacred one life.

And yes, this is why we are here to deepen our awareness of that dimension. And the sacred is everywhere. If you become truly present you would find the sacredness everywhere.

It's easier here in certain places that are called sacred There is less of a density in the structures the physical structures, the forms. There is a transparency almost to the forms. Something shines through the forms.

And this is why we call those places sacred. But even here there are some people who cannot sense that because they are not present enough when they walk in the garden. They are still in their head thinking about where they are going the day after tomorrow and the accumulation of problems which are thought forms that are part of their sense of self.

I have important problems to think about. And occasionally you get a glimpse three seconds of presence and you get a glimpse and immediately there comes the movement of thought again. So some people cannot be present here.

Most of you can. And those who cannot I believe will quickly deepen and see how easy it is to be present and how hard it is not to be present. Normally people tell me the opposite.

They say it's so hard to be present. And this is what the mind believes. But the opposite is true.

Not being present to the now is hard. To live trapped in your mind is hard. That makes living into something that is a struggle and an effort.

And you never get there. You never make it. Because you live for the future which is only a thought form.

And this is another aspect of living trapped in thought with your whole sense of self trapped in thought hoping that at some point you will find yourself, complete yourself or it's all going to work out in the end. And in the way the mind imagines it it cannot work out. Because every form dies.

And every structure eventually dissolves again. And the mind only thinks in terms of forms and structures and it hopes that life will work itself out on that level of structures and forms. And it's always disappointed because it cannot.

And the miracle is it's already working out at this very moment. It's already as it should be at this moment. You have already arrived at the place of sacredness at this moment.

It's easier to see it here, to sense that here. More difficult to feel that this moment is sacred when you find yourself at Piccadilly Circus or Times Square. And you need to be an enlightened being perhaps which simply means very present to see the sacredness in the flashing Coca-Cola sign at Piccadilly Circus.

And you need to be a Buddha to see the sacredness in a prison camp. And if one says the prison camp also has the dimension of the sacred if one says that prematurely this will be misunderstood and really will not make sense unless you know within yourself that that which is beyond form the one formless life is indestructible. And some people who were in prison camps realized it for themselves.

So we are here to find that dimension that is deeper than thought within ourselves that has nothing to do with time. And so people ask sometimes how do I still my mind? I want to find the stillness.

And then, yes, there are some good meditation methods and eventually that also has to be left behind otherwise it comes in between who you are. You put a method there to find yourself that is a space between you and yourself. And every method eventually needs to be left behind.

You don't need it. It's the last thing you leave behind. And this particular teaching works without methods.

But if you have a method, it's beautiful and you use it until you don't need it anymore. Every thought in your mind when you are not aware of it as a thought has a sense of self in it. A sense of I am.

And you identify with the movement of thought. And that is the essence of unconscious living. And that is why people continuously live for the future.

The thought form of future where they are hoping to complete their insufficient sense of self. The happy ending of my story. This is not to say you should not pursue certain activities.

Learn new things. Explore new countries. Meet new people.

Learn this and that. Acquire knowledge, expertise here and there. Develop your abilities, physical or mental.

And create whatever you are called upon to create in this world. It is beautiful to create in this world. And on that level, of course, there is always more that you could do.

And as you grow older, there are certain things that you can no longer do. So gradually, on the level of form, your life becomes reduced. There are already many, many things that it is unlikely that I will be able to do.

I am not going to win a title at Wimbledon anymore. It would be a miracle if I managed to do that. Not totally impossible, but I am not even going to try it.

And many other things would say, well, it is just too late. And this is true. For many things, it is too late.

On the level of form, I need to accept, yes, no, I am not going to be the heavyweight boxing champion. It is just too late for that, or it never was possible. So on the level of form, yes, depending on where you are in years, there may still be many things that you can add to what you can do, and what you know, and what you explore.

Or it may be that you are reaching the end of the lifespan of this form, so there is little time left, and there is not that much more that you can add to yourself. And that is fine too. Now the question is, are you looking for yourself when you attempt to add more to who you are?

And that is the dilemma of human existence. There is a compulsive searching for more. Not that there is anything wrong with doing new things.

No. But there is a compulsive striving towards the next moment, and the next, and the next, hoping to add more to who I think I am. Thought forms.

Possessions, attainments, recognition by other people, all thought forms. My, I have not enough yet. I don't feel secure enough.

I only have five houses and three cars, and I still don't feel secure. And I think the houses are not big enough. That must be the reason.

Or they write about me in the papers, and then, okay, and by the way, I don't have five houses, just an example. Or to get recognition in that they all write about me, and then I read in the papers, finally people have recognized who I am. They think I'm great.

And that temporarily gives you the feeling of, I have now added that universal recognition to who I think I am. And many people strive for that. They think, when are

they going to discover me?

When are they going to realize that I am special? They may never realize it. There is a search for specialness in the mind-made sense of self that in some cases is fulfilled, and in most cases is not fulfilled on the level where it's seeking.

And so in either case, that sense of specialness, you could say, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want, and getting what you want. Because all the people who have attained universal recognition in whatever field, they are not happy either.

They are not at peace with themselves. They do not feel the sense of security and the sense of finally having arrived, that before they had it, they had associated with that idea. Once people recognize me, then I will have arrived.

And then the moment comes, and at first it feels good, and then you see that people's opinion of you are only thought forms. They are images that they create, or if they are very well known, the media creates a fiction that has your name. And then you read about yourself in the paper, and you see, who is this?

They're writing about, there's nothing to do with me at all. And so many people become unhappy, even more unhappy, when they attain recognition. The world tells them, yes, you are special, and yet, I don't feel special.

Or they see, this is an illusion, that's not me, it's an image, a mind-created image. And a few people then go beyond all the mind-created sense of identity because they have attained what the world tells us is desirable, wealth, property, recognition, attainment here or there, and yet, it has not provided them with what they were really looking for, myself, a sense of being rooted in life, the fullness of life, as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life. And so there are many famous people who take drugs, and they need to dull the dreadful unhappiness they feel inside because even the illusion of more in the future, that most people are still living by, doesn't work anymore, because if you already have everything, the illusion that the more, by attaining more in the future, you're going to be happy, can't work anymore for you.

What a dreadful fate. You can't look to the more anymore to feel that you are yourself. And so they feel even more unhappy, they cannot escape into the next moment anymore.

So they need to take some drugs so that for a little while, I feel better. Or a few break through to a deeper level within themselves. And realize that that sense of specialness that operated on the level of better than or more than was an illusion.

You can pursue it, and it will take you nowhere. It can never fulfill itself because it is a thought form, me, the special one, that you wanted to incorporate into the story of me,

that is the basis of your identity as long as you are trapped only in thought. Me, the special one.

Some people have the fiction in their head that they are... I don't want to take away anybody's fiction if they still like it. You could have the fiction in your head that in a past lifetime you were Napoleon.

And that can give you a sense of specialness but it is derived from the movement of thought and images. But that keeps some people going. Nobody might agree with you that you were Napoleon, but at least temporarily it keeps you...

But you have to keep thinking about it and tell the story to others. And others have other stories where other people say, yeah, that's true, that's who you are. But it is based on the movement of thought and the emotions that go with those thoughts.

So you have a whole identity based on a personal history. Very little. And it's not going to last very long.

The soap bubble of my personal history is going to pop soon. And everybody can say, I'm not predicting my imminent death, nobody knows. But everybody's death is ultimately imminent because one year or 50 years, it comes quite soon.

And it'll be now when it comes, not tomorrow. And so to be trapped in that sense of self, a conceptual reality, that is a dreadful fate. It's constant neediness, which even gets translated into the spiritual.

Once you have realized, okay, I'm done with possessions, I know that that's not it. But be careful here with other thought forms that arise to replace. For example, you might have spent 20 years of your life making money.

And then you see, okay, I'm now giving away my BMW. I'm going to buy a bicycle because I'm spiritual. And I will only wear certain spiritual clothes or this or that.

It doesn't matter what it is. I'm on my bicycle and then I can be on my bicycle and look at the person who is still so unconscious that he's driving his BMW and can think how much superior I am in my spiritual. And of course, what you're carrying now is a much heavier thought form than the BMW thought form.

So your sense of self has become, can, it could, it's quite possible that the BMW man has less of a sense of self than the man on the bicycle. It's possible, probably not, but it's possible. So be careful with any, how the mind shifts and then chooses another story to feel, but always to feel, to make itself feel more than in one way or another so that it can, it works through comparison because it's thought.

I think of, I have an image of who I am and then I need to compare that to who I think

other people are. So I impose images on myself, mental concepts and images and then I impose them on others and then I compare my image with that image. Okay, I'm more spiritual than this or he's more spiritual, he's been at it for much longer than me.

And then you get how much you know. Knowledge is another one. You casually mention from your great store of knowledge, you casually mention a few things and the other person is dumbfounded, doesn't know what you, and it's obvious that you know more than he.

And that gives the feeling of, and so it works with little things to enhance its always very precarious sense of self and then it loves being right and it loves others to be wrong because that's the only way you can be right. It loves being right and feels itself enhanced momentarily through, ah, I'm right. So it's always the strengthening of the fiction of self, the fiction of me, me and my story, and that people go through life looking for that.

That's the purpose of their life, is to strengthen the fiction of me. Ha, ha, ha. And so that becomes the motivating force behind their actions, what they do.

And it's always, it's an uneasy thing because very often you feel less than somebody else and then you have to kind of work around that. Less special than he. He knows more, but on the other hand I look better.

And then other people, if they cannot achieve the specialness in the way in which the world tells us you ought to be special, they achieve a reverse specialness by feeling unfairly treated by life. By feeling unfairly treated by feeling that they are a victim of certain people or situations and in their thought form of being a victim they feel very special. So you can still win even if you lose.

[Speaker 3] (38:26 - 38:28)

The mind is very clever.

[Speaker 1] (38:29 - 59:32)

And a victim identity can be very strongly lodged in some people's minds. And as soon as you meet them and after five minutes they will tell you their story. You know what happened to them.

25 years ago it happened. And of course, yes, dreadful things did happen 25 years ago and they happen today also in this mad world. But building an identity around some form of suffering that happens at some point or repeatedly in this mad world where suffering is inevitable to build a sense of specialness around that then you have put yourself into a dreadful prison with bars all around.

But at least you think you know who you are. You have a story. Oh great, at least I have a story.

My life treated me more unfairly than most people. So I can feel more then. And so whatever the mind, it will find something to give itself an identity, a conceptual identity.

And it is very much afraid of losing the story, of abandoning it, stepping beyond it. And usually, the story needs to become unpleasant for people to be pushed out of it. It's because in a way the story is a dream.

The dream of who I am. And if a dream becomes very unpleasant, then you will want to wake up. No dream of me is ultimately all that pleasant.

But some are more unpleasant than others. So see how the self, the conceptual self continuously tries to survive, not only to survive and protect itself from others, and to use others to enhance itself, use them in one way or another. And that determines the relationship between humans when you haven't stepped beyond that.

There is wanting to use another human or feeling you need to protect yourself from another human being. Those are the two things that govern relationships in the egoic state. You either use them or you fear them.

You need them and you're afraid of them. And sometimes both at the same time. And of course that also means there is no true relationship.

It gets distorted because you don't know who you are. You have only an image in the head that tries to make itself stronger because it doesn't feel enough yet. I'm not enough yet.

And so for some people the sense of specialness is attained by frequent complaining in the head and out aloud about life and situations and people and what's going on and it really shouldn't be happening. They should do something about it. It's all very bad indeed.

Why doesn't he... And there's blaming, continuously complaining and blaming and that the ego loves because it makes itself right by doing that. When you complain about something or somebody you feel you are right and the person or the situation you complain about is wrong.

I'm not saying complain in a practical sense when you say I'd like to exchange this thing that I bought because it's not working. That's fine. It's practical and you do something about it.

But the complaining that is the telling of stories in the head that has no practical purpose whatsoever, that constantly is in a conflict relationship with the present moment. There's

always something about it that isn't right and so you complain or something has just happened and you complain or you complain because it hasn't happened yet. So many people feel they cannot be themselves or truly at peace with themselves because of something that happened or something that hasn't happened.

Those are the two reasons why you cannot be yourself. Either something has happened and that's preventing me from being myself truly or something hasn't happened yet. And if that doesn't happen, I can't be myself.

Isn't that a strange thing? I need something to happen so that I can be myself. So we are not...

All the many ways we are talking about this here so that you can recognize it when it happens in you because it is a universal pattern in every human. It's inherited. It is the collective human mind in its egoic unconscious state that operates in that way.

That keeps you trapped on the surface of your being. On the little surface movement, the wave movement of life. The forms of life.

All the things that happen and you're continuously trapped in that, on the level of form. Just... And of course on the level of form which includes even thought forms.

They are primordial forms. When you are identified with every thought that comes into your head and of course there is never an end to it because the next thought comes immediately afterwards. It's a string.

And so it goes the whole day long. It goes... And occasionally you get the little glimpses that keep you sane.

So that you can still survive here. They keep you from committing suicide or they keep you from going totally insane. You have little moments of...

And they may be short but they keep you alive. There is a little bit of joy seeping through from the depths of your being. Through the layers, the heavy layers of mind.

There's a little crack appears here and there. If it didn't, you would be totally lost in here and you certainly wouldn't be sitting here. And so occasionally there's moments, it may be when there's sudden beauty and it's overwhelming or sudden moment of danger that wakes you up out of the continuous voice in the head Oh!

And suddenly there's more intense aliveness. Beingness. Presence.

And then thought comes back. Or it could be for some people danger in the form of physical illness can come and suddenly that wakes you up. Oh!

And suddenly you realize all the things that you pursued and you thought were

important are not important at all. So already something collapses on the level of thought. All the things that mattered so much and suddenly you develop a physical illness and see it doesn't matter at all.

And so that can be helpful for some. It can be an awakening for some people. Or it may be some people are kept sane by an animal.

Because whenever it's the only way they can relate to another being that is non-conceptual because when they meet humans they are trapped in the concepts that they have about every human they meet. They impose mental concepts and images in the form of what they think about. They know exactly what they think about you.

They're not relating to you, they're relating to the thoughts in their head they have about you. And most people do it to each other. So you have only two thought-made entities trying to be in a relationship.

Each one both needing and fearing the other. And this is of course why relationships are so problematic these days. So some people are kept sane by an animal and that the pets fulfill an incredible function that hasn't been fully acknowledged and recognized in this world.

They keep humanity sane. Because there you have when you touch the dog or the cat or whatever it is and for a moment you're not some people even there they carry ego but those are the extreme cases. You touch the animal and you can be yourself.

You don't need to psychologically protect yourself from the animal or want something from you just can be with that and you can something transmits itself because the animal lives more deeply connected with the source of life than most humans. Less removed or one could say the illusion has not grown to such an extent of being a separate entity, a me and the rest of the universe. The animal still has the oneness with the totality hasn't lost it totally.

It's deeply rooted in being. So the animal does not create a world of problems. The animal is one with life.

And humans have separated themselves from life. They have a conceptual image. This is me and there's the rest of the world.

There's a barrier. And there's the other, the other human being. A dreadful concept, other.

And they're needing others and fearing others. Walking through life and other is mentally another concept. So the egoic self the stronger you're trapped in the egoic sense of self the more you will emphasize the otherness of others.

And others will all become reduced to walking caricatures because the few labels that you have about them you reduce them. And they're basically all caricatures. And sometimes when people, you listen to people they mention about somebody they met or somebody they know and see how stupid that person is and they have a few judgments and when you listen to that you see this caricature of this strange distorted human being and when you meet them you say, this is the person we're talking about?

Yeah. And so the animal is not burdened by the continuous stream of thinking. It does not have a conceptual identity like the humans.

So it hasn't separated itself. So it can be an access point for some humans into being. A being without and it is for some humans it's a moment when they actually thought subsides when they pat their dog or you have a purring cat on your chest suddenly you think thought quiets becomes more quiet and you have a space of stillness and you feel the purring of a cat on your chest or simply to watch an animal if you can truly watch it can take you out of your mind and you become present because the animal is present and the same with the realm of nature, the trees and the flowers and the blades of grass they are all present they are all surrendered to life one with life, a beautiful temporary expression of one life and so for some humans that's their only access point and for some even that doesn't work anymore I knew someone with a very strong ego who had ego battles with her cat if the cat didn't come she had the kitchen window open and the cat one evening didn't appear and she said where is my cat and then she would shut the window and said if she doesn't want to see me I don't want to see her and so the poor cat had to stay outside all night that also happens so there are cases where humans cannot even relate to animals anymore and so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient, always feeling a sense of lack, always needing more always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other needing some kind of conflict so that it's separate sense of self can remain intact what can I be in conflict with today what can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself ah there it is and so when millions of humans live like that then the result is what we read as human history a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet incredible suffering and so the same you see on television tonight when you switch on the news you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage and yet here we are here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of one could say collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from and so one could say well how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind and of course you can ask the same question on a personal level how can does God allow me to be ill, how dare he she it to allow me to be ill to suffer and of course within the larger whole everything has its place and everything is as it should including your personal illness for the moment doesn't mean healing cannot happen but

there are many humans here who were brought here who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives physical illness perhaps or some great loss and so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering your physical suffering whatever it may be to some extent began to dissolve the egoic structures in your mind, it started to shake it loose so that something else could come through and you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment and then you end up here and no matter what your story is and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake the story of me was all one big mistake you are here now and that's an amazing thing to be, to be here now and see that was the story and the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realize it as yes, on the level of form this is how my life unfolded and now let me speak personally for one moment I could easily look upon my whole life let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago it happened before that nobody told me that I was important until that I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster nothing actually worked out I tried that for a few years and then I was at university and then I did my PhD and then I gave that up and then I drifted for two years and then I went into that and then I tried that and it didn't, things, many things okay and then my mother said okay now you are 45 what have you achieved? others have already built up big businesses and so on the level of story it was a big disaster and yet fortunately at some point already I had given up identification with the story, the story was only my identity up to the age of 29 and it was a very unhappy one even there even when I was, that was my relatively successful, the only wildly success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student and it made me happy for two weeks

[Speaker 3] (59:34 - 59:37)

laughter laughter laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (59:40 - 1:16:43)

and so how, isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower the flower of consciousness and perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows, you have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism, the symbol of Buddhism the lotus flower it grows, it has its roots in the mud and it grows out of that and there is nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story laughter laughter and the good news is every story ultimately fails because the forms because the story is based on the forms, it identifies with forms and no forms last for that long no building lasts for that long, eventually it crumbles, all forms are temporary and they are beautiful the essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible, but even this beautiful form, finchon, it is not eternal as a form but the eternal shines through the forms here, that is why because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here so that that

which is beyond form no matter what we call it stillness presence beingness a deep sense of I am being that before got mixed up with the story of me and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness what the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story I want to be special that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being and that is what deep down you can sense even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self, they feel that there is somewhere there is something precious that is me, but they confuse it with the forms thought forms, it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form, with thought and a story in the head and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self the self that the Buddha even 2600 years ago recognized as an illusion an enormous insight, the greatest perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion and by that he means the self that is identified with any form thought form physical form, anything and that is the illusion, to lose oneself in some form and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form one could say incarnates in form and there is nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form but if you lose yourself in the incarnation and ultimately you had to do that too, that was part of the totality of how things work to lose oneself is as the Buddha called it suffering then you suffer because you don't know who you are anymore you are looking for yourself in some form in some thought form in some physical form that you identify with which is also a thought form me and so everybody is looking for the essence of their being not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more so the one place it's all like some strange game the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look which is the present moment they look there for themselves and to feel I want to be more on the level of form you can temporarily be more that's true and then that dissolves again but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate but you do not need to be more you are already a full expression of the one life you are already complete on the level of the timeless the essence of your being now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth for that one could say you need time to hear the message that to be who you are you don't need time but the paradox is there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless and they don't come here they need in other words they need more time they need to continue to look for themselves and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search that is part of the larger design the frustration is built into human existence and so that's what the world is for the so called world it is there to frustrate you laughter and to drive you deeper to eventually drive you out of identification with form because as long as you identify with form it is so frustrating and you can never make it you can never arrange

the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need, you think you need to be yourself or sometimes you can do it for very brief a very brief time span you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life my health is good, my relationship is great great money got possessions, everybody loves me laughter they all write good things about me um it's all working my job, my living situation my finances, my health my relationships, they're all great but before long something there starts to crumble here and there it's either the finances or it's the relationship or it's the living situation it's in the nature of the world of form that nothing stays fixed for very long and so it starts to crumble again here you just sorted it all out laughter and so that's why humans they experience life as a series of frustrations why can't it work?

laughter and it doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy I demand that this world should complete who I am should give me my sense of self I just need this and that from there and then it's all this is what I demand and then it's not happening there's something wrong here life isn't working it seems to be working for everybody else but it's not working for me I read in the magazines all these glossy people laughter it seems to be working for them laughter but only if you look at the glossy pictures if you visited them at home you would see that it's not working for them either so it's built into living here is frustration it's meant to be frustrating this is the larger the whole there is a purpose but people haven't seen it so it's quite a relief to recognize first of all the world cannot make me happy secondly to demand that situations people, places or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated whether I attain or do not attain laughter ok that looks very negative doesn't it laughter and that's why when you don't go deeper when you only see the surface you see, oh all is vanity as the Old Testament prophet said, vanity of vanities all is vanity I've seen it all, I can't remember the exact words but I'm giving you a free translation laughter I've seen it all, I've done it all and it's all completely meaningless is what he said and that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all and now why did they put this into the Bible, isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain, whatever you can achieve is vanity they put that in there because when you see the truth of it you're already becoming free of it the seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy the seeing of the short-lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in real life what is it in you that is able to see that and say, ah or even laugh what before was a dreadful story and frustration you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma but the human condition laughter and you derived your sense of self from that which is nothing personal whatsoever, it's the human condition and that it's the human condition in it's unconscious state it's unenlightened state and that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to and now you step out of it by simply seeing it the seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness and that is why they put it into the bible because when you see it that which can witness that in you the

impermanent nature of all forms the fictitious nature of the mind made story what is it in you that is able to look at that and see, ah that is not thought that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it there, ah or let's say better, the light of awareness shines on it the light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in the frustrating story of my life and there is no life that is not ultimately frustrating it only begins it loses it's frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction or for yourself when you give up demanding that people, places, situations should make you happy fulfill you you don't demand it anymore then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are because life at this moment already always is as it is it always, the isness, you cannot doubt whatever forms appear in the present moment it always is as it is and so most humans are in a conflict relationship with the isness of life they internally run away from it or reject it or criticize it complain about it or look somewhere else I don't want the isness of this I want that so when you see what the world cannot do for you you no longer you drop your demand because you see it as absurd to demand something of the world that it cannot deliver and then you can simply be with whatever is and is and this moment are always inseparable of course whatever is at this moment is as it is I don't demand that this place even if you come here and you demand that Fintan should make me happy if you came with that demand you would probably already have experienced frustration here because no place is capable of doing that for long or doing it at all and so you come here and say oh that shouldn't be here there's a royal air force base right next to the spiritual center it doesn't make sense and so you can complain about that, that shouldn't be why did they put that here they should have gone somewhere else and then you can say I came here to find peace and what do I find I find screaming jets I'm going home and that's only one thing and you'll find many more my roommate snores I can't get a night I have to wait for the bathroom I'm going home and it's not sunny this is late May and it's not sunny I should never have come to Scotland so if you just little examples if you expect a place to fulfill you it can't do that even if you went to a South Pacific island there would be something that is not quite right it doesn't fit there whatever it is the sunshine every day it's too much

[Speaker 3] (1:16:46 - 1:16:47)

the mosquitoes

[Speaker 1] (1:16:47 - 1:22:33)

at night I didn't know about that they didn't mention them in the travel brochures so here again a beautiful opportunity to drop the demand that a particular place should make you happy or give you peace or help you find yourself and simply then bring a yes to whatever form this moment takes instead of demanding that the form of this moment should be different in order to satisfy me so you bring an inner alignment into your relationship with the present moment let's put it like that the way in which you relate to

life which is always now only now an inner alignment comes in with now so you do not internally separate yourself from now which is life life and now are one because that is a source of great frustration and suffering and so whatever form this moment takes there's a jet flying there may be raining and then there's some sun coming through good, bad, the mind could call this good could call this bad but it all is as it is at this moment and an enormous freedom comes into your life when you drop the demand that this should be other than it is and then you no longer demand that Fintone should make you happy or give you peace and then every moment or rather the one moment is as it is you go one step at a time to wherever you go and you look around and you stand and you walk and you sit and there are people coming people going things here, things there and suddenly as you bring an inner alignment to the now, something arises within you that has nothing to do with the form that this moment takes and it arises because you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is so in allowing the form that this moment takes internally embracing it, saying I might as well say yes because it is life because it is the only moment there ever is the now I might as well embrace it say yes, that's how it is this does not diminish your ability to change if anything needs changing action arises out of the alignment with what is so you can be aligned with getting something that is not good you can have food that's gone cold or something and then you bring it back to the kitchen and you say, this food is cold would you please heat it up again if it's possible nothing wrong with that but the action comes out of alignment the same action could arise out of an inner resistance to what is and then this immediately self comes in a complaining self a self that enhances itself through its complaints and then walks the same action but with a fundamentally different energy field you then walk with that plate to the kitchen and say what is this, don't you know, don't you heat your food here you should be serving you are in this your action is to enhance yourself through it, to make the self right, to strengthen the fiction of me, and then you do that to another human and that other human is going to defend itself and try to react in order to resist the diminishment of their sense of self because that's what the ego attempts to do it says, you are wrong, it tries to diminish the fiction of that other person and then the other will defend itself and come up with even bigger cannons and start shouting back at you in order to defend its diminishment of, again, the diminishment of the fiction what a world so you could live when you live in alignment with what is intelligence arises in your life that is far greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind or the ability of the mind to analyse or solve IQ problems or crossword puzzles that's a limited tiny form of intelligence, nothing wrong with it, but it's tiny, but that's what this world calls intelligence you can memorise and analyse and be quick in giving answers manipulate thoughts and keep as many thoughts as possible in your head

[Speaker 3] (1:22:35 - 1:22:35)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (1:22:37 - 1:31:23)

and yet there's a far deeper intelligence that our civilisation knows nothing of and that is that out of which all true creation comes true creativity comes and so that is accessed when you bring a yes no more than that, a yes to the present moment that by the way includes the past because there are some people who carry a strong grievance or resentment connected with something that happened in the past somebody did it to you or a situation happened in the past and there's still a strong grievance that they carry and how does that work when I say accepting the present moment accepting the present moment the way it is now includes accepting the past because it is only because you believe that something that happened in the past is interfering somehow with your ability to be alive or to be yourself or to be fully yourself at this moment you are saying ok maybe you lost a limb or something like that somebody cut it off 10 years ago and you carry the grievance so how does when you accept this moment as it is you accept this as it is one limb is missing that is as it is that is the form that this moment takes well and you accept that this is how it is then you don't have the reference to the past anymore as having caused that and on the level of form of course that is a disability it prevents you from winning Wimbledon this year, you can't do it anymore yes on the level of form perhaps that imposed some limitation on your life but the world is full of limitations that are inherent in form if it is not one set of limitations you will encounter some other set of limitations so there is almost never a present moment that does not have certain limitations even the noise coming occasionally from the air force base next door could be considered a kind of limitation or even if you can't get a good night's sleep because your roommate snores could be considered a relatively minor limitation in your life but there are large limitations and they are also to do with the world of form and that's what the world of form does you can exchange limitations you can of course improve your life on the level of form there is nothing wrong with that as long as you are not looking for yourself in it it's beautiful to play with forms in your life ok I'm going to make money now I'll play with that but not hoping that once you've made enough then you can finally be someone if you are not someone now, being you cannot find it through money or through future then you can play with the world of form and the miraculous thing is when you drop your demands towards the world of form it should make you happy then wherever you find yourself whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you meet wherever you go place, situation person is actually quite satisfying because you have touched something within yourself that is deeper than the movement of thought which is form deeper than form the movement of thought is still form so the simple thing of internally bringing a yes to this moment is that all?

yes, but it needs for you to do that requires a certain degree of presence to be able to say this is as it is instead of being taken over by an old reactive pattern governed by the fictitious self that says this doesn't fit into the story of me or how can I fit this into my this isn't completing my story in fact this shouldn't be in my story at all get out of here so many people they are walking stories often when they meet other humans they don't want to be with other humans they say get out of my story you shouldn't be in here I

want somebody else in here and again so you step beyond you step out of the movement of thought and the stillness and the peace arises the moment you become friendly with what is that's all, to become friendly with what is no matter what form this is takes it's going to change anyway quite soon and people who are stuck for years are usually stuck because there is a resistance pattern inside them that keeps them stuck in the same situation and the resistance pattern says I want to get out of this dreadful place that I'm in and every day they go to the office and they say this is and the same energy is there, the negativity and the resistance and every time they answer the phone, yes and so you get some people traditionally people at government offices carry a lot of frustration, I don't know if that's still true, probably is everywhere these days and so you people are continuously and they say why am I stuck in this boring job with all these dreadful people they always want something from me and 25 years later they're still stuck and complaining and then they hear the message it is possible to live differently it is possible to say yes not to say yes to a story, not say yes to ok I might as well accept that I've spent 25 years in this dreadful office and I'm probably going to spend another 10 years in this dreadful office I might as well say yes to that because I read that in a book somewhere no, this has nothing to do this has nothing to do with bringing a yes to some kind of story about your life or if you were in prison to say ok I might as well accept that everything has failed in my life and I've been in here for 20 years and I've got to do another 15 years and I might as well accept that I've been a miserable failure nothing saying yes to the present moment only means the present moment not a story it means it takes you out of the story and that is vital in your spiritual life now as a spiritual practice as often as possible to break the continuity between past and future ok I'm coming from there and I'm going there I'm just busy trying to get there and getting this done I'm on my way there don't stop me now laughter laughter and break ok but what about this moment where are you at this moment this moment

[Speaker 3] (1:31:25 - 1:31:27)

laughter oh

[Speaker 1] (1:31:29 - 1:41:30)

sigh sigh and suddenly you wake up out of that stream of past future that was pulled you from past to future always that is old conditioning same old thing same old thing no matter how much you complain the more you complain the more you're stuck and suddenly you take the present moment out of the story and you ah you wake up and suddenly alertness comes for example you might hear the birds singing oh and you realize it's beautiful and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an aliveness in the body every cell is alive the life that you are that which animates the body and as you feel that aliveness you're also aware that there's a stillness around you and in that stillness there's this incredibly beautiful sound that this little being produces which is a celebration of life every moment you've stepped out of the story into the aliveness of the

present moment and yet you can still deal with things you may still be walking wherever you have to go and when you arrive there you're there and confront another human being you can still be present so there's more and more presence rather than time it's reversing whereas before you were dominated by time now you use time still but allow presence in which means break the story as often as you can step out of into the aliveness of this moment and then a far greater intelligence comes in and love and joy, all the things that otherwise you can only think about but never experience all those suddenly come in and transform even the story not that the story is ever going to be continuously wonderful in the level of form forms always come and go but because you're not dependent anymore on the forms of your life the circumstances of your life you have access to the life that is beyond form, that is you, the stillness the aliveness the I am that is deeper than I am this or I am that and then all those all the beauty and aliveness and joy that is there in the moment even if the forms were crumbling it can be there you would be missing the whole thing because you would be drifting continuously adrift in the mind only and the bird, you would not even hear it or hear it for a moment and say, oh that's pretty and then, ok, my problems, what are my problems laughter whenever you think you have problems a good question is what is the problem now well well I'm trying to see my lawyer about this thing and there's a bank, I'm going bankrupt and I'm seeing my lawyer about what is the problem now laughter there's no problem, I'm sitting here breathing beautiful bird sing birdsong stillness, space there's an aliveness that I feel inside every cell is alive there isn't really a problem now, but there may be one tomorrow and of course when tomorrow comes you have to ask the same question what is the problem now, as you sit in front of the lawyer, I say sign here to declare your bankruptcy you say, ok, what is the problem now here's a piece of paper and here's a pen scratching on a piece of paper and then you put it down and you listen to the bird and see the tree and the flower and feel the aliveness within and say, I'm still alive so you don't need the idea I am a bankrupt person to give you your sense of self anymore because your sense of self comes from the life that you are the aliveness of your very being and then, yes, on the level of form it happens that I had to declare bankruptcy I'm still breathing and the bird is still singing and a million people before me have survived that and this is just one example a more extreme example a friend of mine Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher was visiting a woman in hospital who had advanced cancer and she came into her room hospital room and the woman was of course very unhappy and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman got even more unhappy and she said you don't see a problem I'll show you a problem and she took off her blanket and showed her right leg was two or three times the size of her left leg this is a problem and Byron Katie said oh so your problem is that you think your right leg should be the same size as your left leg and in that moment the woman laughed for the first time in a long time she laughed because she dissociated from the thought form she stepped out of thought which judged this form as wrong which judged the present moment as wrong, should not be she was trapped in the thought form this should not be invested with a sense of self and so the stepping out is vital for you the story has a

momentum that will reassert itself again and again because that is the momentum of the mind and I'm not saying that you no longer deal with things in your daily life you deal with them much more effectively when you have access to the deeper dimension where true intelligence resides that can then flow even into the way in which you deal with things on the level of form so even on the level of your story the story will unfold more harmoniously when you no longer demand that it should make you happy or do anything for you then you can truly honour this level of form because the neediness is gone because you are not looking to it anymore to give you a sense of who you are because who you are comes out of the aliveness and depth of this moment and so to step out of the story and into this moment as much as you can it's vital, always, ok just a second, where is it now especially when you get upset you lose yourself in some thought movement or you can help others if you have an agreement with your partner or friend and when you can see that they are not losing themselves in thought which almost certainly is going to be a world of problems it's not that they are solving problems by thinking, they are creating problems by thinking

[Speaker 3] (1:41:30 - 1:41:32)

to solve

[Speaker 1] (1:41:35 - 1:50:48)

the true solutions always come when for a moment you step out of thinking and become truly intelligent by becoming still and present and alive and then if thought should come back often a little later you suddenly have a creative insight that before wasn't there it came because that dimension operated in your life and then it comes more and more and then everything changes your relationships change because you don't demand that the other person should do something for me enhance my sense of self you don't compare yourself to others and try to be more than another to strengthen your sense of self it's fine to allow everyone to be as they are and you don't need to change them to say you should behave differently and then I'll be happy if you behave differently you will make me happy but in the meantime I'm going to be very unhappy and I'm going to show you that I'm unhappy so that you behave differently and then finally make me happy and many relationships work like that the partners show each other they're very unhappy because they want to change in their behavior and of course by their unhappiness they strengthen the same pattern and so especially in this beautiful place here don't pollute the garden of Fintan and be a walking story here that is heavy your steps become heavy and where a walking story steps no grass grows and so humanity has that that is collectively how humanity is on the planet now a great heaviness has descended on the planet and that is the collective human mind with its accumulated enormous amount of negativity and dreadful delusion and that's the heaviness that weighs heavily on nature also and life forms all life forms feel that pain so here step lightly don't carry the burden of personal selfhood around with you which is your past

and your problematic future but be light as take one step at a time and be the presence through which you perceive be there with every step and when you perceive the tree the flower you are able to perceive against the background of stillness so you are not creating a barrier of concepts between nature and yourself a field of oneness arises between nature and yourself and then nature will be extremely helpful it's teaching you to be one with life to be still just go to any tree and see how still it is and the moment you notice how still and alive and surrendered to life the tree is that in you which notices that is the stillness otherwise you wouldn't even see that there's stillness there if you approach it only with thought you would have some kind of personal thing to do with nature oh that tree that would be great in my garden and don't feel guilty if that thought crossed your mind or even more wanting to pick a flower don't do it here also why I must have that it's mine now even on that level the personal self can come in or it comes in oh that that looks like a tree that my Aunt Mary had 10 years ago in her garden I wonder if it's still there she was a strange person but to be truly present there you are a field of aware presence walking and then it may happen that in addition to the beauty that you see around you and give give walk sometimes and be with, give some attention to perhaps a tree or flower for a little while, just be with it without no wanting nothing, just being with it and then you may notice there's a form you may notice in the background the presence that you are the light of consciousness in which this tree appears the presence the stillness that you are as a background to whatever you perceive birdsong trees, flowers different noises in nature and so there's the that which appears the form and that which is the space that enables this form to appear which is the space of yourself the space of now the space of consciousness the one consciousness, the light of consciousness in which forms appear so that is and even here as you sit here you can sense that in the foreground there's this room, there's the voice the shapes and colours and yet what is it that makes all this possible to be the being, being itself before it becomes something that is the one life the one consciousness that you are underneath the form so you are in two dimensions one could say at the same time the formless and form there's the and this is your practice in nature, nature is not challenging, it doesn't you can stay present easily with a tree or flower human beings are more challenging and so they pull you quickly into identification again with form with thought, reaction because most humans still come from thought, they are thought entities and they want you to contribute to their universe and they say give me more thought confirm to me that my story is important and then you can tell me yours and I'll do the same for you

[Speaker 3] (1:50:48 - 1:50:49)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (1:50:57 - 1:53:18)

and in bed tonight as you lie there you may find the mind wanting to drag you along with it again and think about ok there's only one more day or whatever it is, one more day or

three more days or four more days left here and then I have to think about the things that are waiting for me when I get home, let me think about my problems now and then you suddenly remember ah the now all there ever is this moment where is it of course you can't see it but sometimes it happens that you wake up, your sense perception suddenly wake up, ah and then you feel the aliveness in the body and you can lie on your bed feeling the aliveness within that permeates the body, yes there's life, it's subtle but it's there and then the need to think lessens and you can just be a field of aware presence and perhaps you can listen to certain noises that you hear from nature and if it's your roommate snoring that's fine too, that's what is and be and if you have to remove yourself from that room that's fine or if you throw something at him or her you can do that too your ability to do things is not diminished when you live in surrender all it means, I surrender to what is I could try it, let's see if he wakes up if I throw something at him ok still snoring and you see that things that before would have created frustration and upset and anger and there's so many that happen in a person's life all those things that before would have created that now are simply part of the is-ness of this moment and suddenly you have a space around it

[Speaker 3] (1:53:19 - 1:53:20)

ok

[Speaker 1] (1:53:21 - 1:56:22)

and that space is the space of presence and so and then you get to know yourself as the spaciousness around things, so to speak not the thing you are that which allows the thing to be and then to disappear and then something else to come that's the now that's the deeper meaning of now is the space in which everything happens and so the now and yourself are one and the power of now of course is the power of life of the very being that you are and when I say yourself, of course I don't mean the fictitious self of the story that is form-based and thought-based but the deeper being that you are being itself freedom from the world ultimately and then the world becomes a very pleasant place not frustrating anymore things still come and go gain and loss happen birth and death continuously happen and that's how it is and there's an underlying peace and that peace is inseparable from who you are that's our practice this weekend and that's the way we can live our life our life which isn't really our life at all which is simply life living us life living through us we don't have a life because then there's me and life not possible we are life the one life in many forms that are born and die continuously the one consciousness, the one life and so life can then live freely through you and it can flower and that flowering may take form also as a creation or it may remain simply as an emanation that comes through this form and that emanation one could call love not the egoic love that says I want you, you stay here I need you and I want you or it says make me happy

[Speaker 2] (1:56:22 - 1:56:24)

sign here on the dotted line

[Speaker 1] (1:56:26 - 3:30:34)

but the true love the love that is a recognition of oneness as an emanation that's the flowering I suggest you stay for a little while until you feel ready to move stay with the stillness that is here the sacred field the sacred space until it's time to move thank you applause the bird is teaching much better than I could I'm sure they got it wrong when they say that Saint Francis was preaching to the birds of course he was listening to the birds they don't need preaching to such a divine sound and such a wonderful exquisite balance between stillness and sound that bird knows about balance there's always quite a long gap and then the next sound comes out of the stillness and it's always fresh and new it's never a repetition of the previous sound with this bird this is why it's so amazing and that would be enough if you have that around as your teacher what else do you need? the bird is teaching the balance between form and formless that's the art of living to live in both dimensions sound and stillness form and formless things and nothingness in this teaching the dimension of stillness of the formless is emphasized because the entire civilization is lost in light in form in things in objects in thoughts the entire civilization is lost in that dimension of things that includes thoughts and that's why there is a particular emphasis in this teaching on that which is missing balance needs to reestablish itself because no civilization can survive without the balance between form and formless now everybody has form already more than enough that's why this teaching isn't based on knowledge or new facts interesting facts new information information and because the world is full of that you can push any button of the many devices that you have and you get information and you're drowning in information and ultimately you see it's what is the point of it all if that's just more of that is that going to save the world more information or more things are we going to find the fullness of life through more things and greater and bigger shopping malls again form or are we going to find ourselves through improving our ability to think and analyze and solve problems analytically that were created by excessive thinking in the first place or as Carl Jung put it you cannot solve a problem on the same level of consciousness that created the problem and so what created the problem of our civilization is that humans lost touch with the formless dimension which we could also call spirit which we could call the sacred which we could call if that word were not had not been misused so much we could call God but we won't call it that and Jesus said what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose yourself or your soul that's really he could already see the tendency where things were going and form also includes time so we cannot deny that time has or seems to be real on the surface of life because it's everywhere as far as forms are concerned time seems to do something to the forms the life forms and it's strange it gradually grinds the forms down it erodes the forms some people have even looked upon time as some dreadful illness that inflicts everybody and that's one way of

looking at it everybody is suffering from a lethal disease the outcome is the end of the form it's just a question of when and so you see it as my father says who is 87 now he says mirrors are not the same quality they used to be so the art is to live in this world where time seems on the one hand to be everywhere and control everything but where on the other hand time is also recognized as ultimately an illusion because if you look more deeply there is no time there is only ever this moment and therefore that is the portal into the formless dimension it's the narrow gate that Jesus talks about that leads to life the narrow gate that leads to life yes, it's very narrow, it's only this to find it and Jesus says there are not many who find it to find it you need to roll up the scroll of your life from which your story is written past future very unclear, you can't quite figure out what's it all about and you roll up people usually live carrying a burden, some more than others, but every carrying the burden of past, me my history I'm hoping or fearing which way it's going hope, fear so you have this okay, you're walking with myself, that's the self the form-based mind-based, time-based self and that has a heaviness to it and the more you carry of time, of past and future and think about it and talk about it and refer to as your sense of identity gives you your sense of self things that happened in the past and future, hoping to find yourself we talked about it then you are lost in form because all these are thought forms time and form go together, so you need to roll up you know these old scrolls you had to roll them, before there were books you had scrolls, you rolled them there's a beautiful story of a vision that the woman who wrote A Course in Miracles that came to her as an inner voice before the whole dictation started she had a vision in which she found a scroll in an old box a very ancient scroll and as she started to unfold unroll the scroll she saw symbols on the left and other symbols on the right, and she heard a voice saying, if you read what's on the left you know the past and if you read what is on the right you'll know the future and she looked at the left and the right and then she rolled it back to the central panel, on which was written God is and she said this is all that I'm interested in I don't want anything else that's all I want God is and then the same voice that had explained to her that is past and that is future said congratulations, you made it this time so her focal point had become the present moment if her focal point had not become the present moment the spaciousness that was necessary for the wisdom to come through her, out of the formless it was then given form by her mind, but the spaciousness would not have been there if she had said, ok, that's interesting let's see, I'm going to look at the future and then years later she would still be looking at the, oh wow and the past is interesting too and God is the isness of now just that and this is, you can use that as an image for your own life as much as possible so be interested in this and that is what we called getting out of the stream of the continuity between past and future as often as possible break that, make space as if you had a veil, and you say this is the veil of my life in which things are written, this is a fabric and then you go in there and separate it ah and then you put your head through into another dimension the way you see it in some of these films of magic and that is ah the awakening into now and as we are all transitional humans at this evolutionary stage of humanity many humans alive now are transitional beings they are dysfunctional as

their manifestations of the old consciousness they are becoming more and more dysfunctional because the old consciousness that is totally identified with mind, form and time that's been running human history for thousands of years is reaching the end of its lifespan it cannot survive much longer and so every human being carries the old also still inside and many humans, and certainly those present here, and many others are transitional beings in the sense that the old still has a momentum within them as the new is arising I call it new because ultimately it's timeless it's not new, there's no time at all, but let's say I saw the name of one second hand shop was called new to you laughter laughter so no words can really express ever express the exact truth, you have to be allow for the fact that language is never quite right and especially is never quite right when you begin to speak of spiritual truth, the formless, because every word is form and ultimately can only function by expressing, reflecting something in the world of form and then it becomes difficult when language is used to express something that is beyond form and that's why Jesus used parables, and he never said this is the kingdom of heaven, he said the kingdom of heaven is like, or is a little bit like that, or like that and he gives you little stories and then the form of the words as long as you don't get entangled in the words and say, oh this is how it is if you allow the words to be pointers, little signposts then it can work but if you say there's the truth it's not, the truth is not in the word and especially in spiritual discourse, the truth is that to which the word points so you have to look beyond the words especially here and so we learn to bring a balance into our lives between time and timelessness between the world of things, handling that situations things objects and not getting lost in things in the world of things, in the world of situations, in the world in the world not losing yourself in the world and that world includes not only the external world but also the world that you carry as the mind made world in the head, because that one creates that one the human made world the so called external human made world and the inner state of consciousness, of course one continuum the inner, the outer only reflects the inner and so on the outer level for example, we have a civilization that is extraordinarily noisy if somebody came from some past civilization even 200 years back 1000 years back and would arrive here in a city or even in a small town, they would say what is going on with this deafening noise everywhere and these machines everywhere that make noise have I arrived in the hell realm? and if they don't have the noises that are produced by machines, they have to make noise for the sake of noise a lot of there is some good music, but a lot of so called music that you hear in restaurants I don't know if it's the same here in North America hard to find a restaurant without loud music you just open the door and put your head in and you go out again and a lot of that is for the sake of making noise it's called music there are some exceptions of course some music can have a divine function too in some rare cases it still has music that comes out of the stillness that when you listen to music that came out of the stillness whoever created it or whoever is playing it or singing it it comes out of that state of consciousness and then it assumes a form and yet the form is fresh and new it's come out of that and the stillness still clings to it, has a fragrance it still emanates that even if it's sound and that's the beauty of all art true art it reflects

still that state of consciousness out of it, it comes and then you have a lot of pseudo-art in this world where clever minds are trying to be even more clever and think let's think of something new what can we do here maybe we could do that here or that could go there, that would look clever and then okay oh no let's do it they call it art but it lacks something it's totally trapped in form, there's only manipulating old forms nothing new has come in and nothing that can lead you back to the formless which is the original reason for all art is the sacred to be a portal an access point for the sacred so that when you see it or experience it you experience yourself in it you see yourself reflected the formless reflected shining through the form that is why it is true art always there is more than what you see or hear it's not just what you see or hear there is more than that and that shines through the form and that is what can happen to you what is happening to you ultimately it's not everybody's purpose to create works of art, a few humans do that, that is their function partly in this world but much more importantly is for you to become that work of art, your whole life and your very being becomes transparent so that the formless can shine through and that happens when you are no longer totally identified with the world of form and that happens when you have access to the realm of stillness within yourself and then something emanates through the form that is not nothing to do with the form it may emanate only as a silent emanation and not assume any form as such and so that is sometimes the case with so called there have been very few in the past holy people who simply in India they've always existed in any generation in India there have always been a few holy men or women who never did anything and that's very rare for the West they say what did they create what did they do and they never did anything they just sat there and the West says what a useless existence come on get a life get a job and some even because people when you are trapped in form you misperceive it completely because all you see there is a useless form sitting and they say they are parasites on society, they allow themselves to be fed by other people they bring them their food, they should work for a living like myself and that is when the mind that knows nothing but form, looks at the form it will totally misperceive it and so that's the beauty that in India they've always recognized that because they haven't completely lost touch, in fact they may have gone at some point too far in the opposite direction so that they lost interest in form because they went into being more now India is becoming western the more you read about India the more you see they are all into computers these days and cell phones and that's fine too, but the question is where is finding a balance I was totally lost in like most people completely lost in form and then a shift happened and I lost the balance and I became completely lost in the formless we can't really be lost in the formless it's just a way of putting it because the formless is essentially who you are and yet from a normal perspective it looked as if I had lost it laughter laughter because there was somebody who had a promising career and suddenly just sits around on park benches not doing anything anymore just being and tasting continuously the sweetness of being simply the beauty the sweetness of being alive the joy of simply being and then looking upon the world and seeing it reflected in all life forms reflected the joy of being in the trees and the birds and even the humans

running around like mad and knowing that deep down there there is also the very same being and it's beautiful and so from an external perspective the ability to handle forms was gone to manipulate the world of form was gone for a while and then gradually had to re-establish itself so I could do again and of course be at the same time and that is the it is not the destiny of each one of you to move so deeply into being that you are no longer capable of handling the world of form around you that happens occasionally but it tends to happen more to those people who, those few who experience a dramatic shift from one to the other and then for a while they're gone that's of course the beautiful the beautiful sutra of Buddha gate, gate gone, gone, gone to the farthest shore and yet it seems it is our destiny here while we are still in form to balance form and formless here and that's why we are here and for most of you the transition to a new and what is the new state of consciousness that's arising it is the state that is balanced the two dimensions the manifested and the unmanifested balanced in a human being and that is such a radical transformation that when a certain number of humans live in that way so they become what before was a work of art you become the work of art you become that which is transparent to the formless the divine and then that will change the entire world not the way what you experience as the human-made world will be changed completely it is not necessary to speculate now what is the world going to look like when enough humans live in the new consciousness that's not important now the important thing is for us to enter that new state and then what that does to your story who knows how that changes the story the way in which your life unfolds in time what you do out here how that affects where you live what you do and so on you cannot predict nor do you need to predict that are you going to become a great artist are you going to win Wimbledon and of course bear in mind that great artists and the tennis players they are not enlightened masters they have access to that which is greater than the limited human mind in the small field of their activity and most of them when they go back into normal life away from where they have mastery they are just as mad as everybody else and sometimes even more mad because sometimes the mind made entity gets in there and looks at what they did and says, I did that that was me the greatest illusion and then of course it feels very special the ego then derives it identifies with whatever came out of the state of no ego and says, I did that and then begins to believe what other people are saying about you and that you are the greatest because they all they project their images of specialness onto you oh the great pop star whatever and the great pop stars also they have when they compose their songs or some of them where there is even a glimpse of aliveness and freshness, yes there is something there and then the personality the person comes back the moment they step back from the act of creation or the performance they step back and there is the old personality and sometimes it's a dreadful burden for some ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the personal and they just can't do it it's totally misperceived just as the world misperceives it and then they believe themselves to be very special and there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that and the magic that comes

from the formless realm into your life is what when you look at our civilization it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred, it is profane, it is a dreary burdensome structure that humans have created when you look at the mainstream civilization and so many humans no matter what country you go to they seem to be tired, they are weary there's a weariness that they carry the civilization is grinding them down another day of dreary activity, of pointless running around and even those who are still running around they know deep down it's pointless what is the point?

and you ask the big executives in companies where are you going, why are you running around like mad and they can't give you an answer except that well, we are expanding, the organization is expanding we are swallowing up other organizations and that's our reason for being, is to grow, to get bigger it's to accumulate more and so it's all, this is why we are and it's totally meaningless activity and so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self-created structures anymore the over-complicated world absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore mind-created, just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another, one thought after another, the voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form that is obsessed with things and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence, the sacred the stillness the formless, the divine all these have become meaningless in our civilization and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening and so there is in many a search for something else and that number of humans is growing every day and that's the beauty of it so each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet it's not going to happen, it is happening, if it were not happening you could not even sit here it would be intolerable to sit here and yet there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here, you may occasionally feel that arises there's something that doesn't even understand what is being said that hears only the sound of the words and says it can't go to where the words point so you get stuck with the form the sound stuck with the thought and says presence stillness stillness well you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness so this is a good example where the word is only the pointer and then you have to jump off the word stillness points to stillness it's not something to be believed in and the stillness of course is already in you it is not something that we need to create here we need to bring about by being doing the right things and then eventually we'll become still follow a certain course of a recipe if you do A, B, C and D you will finally become still that's very seductive but you have given yourself something to do before you can be still which means before you can find yourself and be yourself that is the problem of every method every spiritual method not that I would outright condemn all methods but the danger with any method is that it gives you time it says, OK, you will arrive and find yourself why not find yourself

already why create something between yourself and yourself so the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully the stillness out of which the thoughts come every thought comes out and then goes back in sense perceptions get you a little closer to it and when you perceive and do not label it whatever you perceive just let it be then there is the perception the form and there is the one could almost say this is a limited analogy no analogies are that great but you could say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted there is a background of spacious stillness that's yourself that's the consciousness that you are formless not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind thoughts they are there too but simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive or think or feel Gurdjieff put it in the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century put it like he called it self-remembrance and of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about ok let me remember who I am my name is such and such no he meant to remember not even to remember words are never right to know the knower to know who knows this in a dream let's say you dream and then you wake up and say it was only a dream, it was unreal of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist there must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded and so in other words there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened and that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist and so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly every situation, everything and even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid first of all, there is nothing solid it just appears solid it's just energy fields in motion and they are not going to remain in that form for very long if you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving it's a temporary it comes into form and dissolves the bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving even this table if we look in 200 years it will still look more or less the same but if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room over a period of 3000 years which is very little on a global scale then you would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling and within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing and it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you and deep down it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is because what is it in you that sees that the short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that that is the aware presence from the stillness you see that and actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is and you don't run away from that fact you just stay with it that's how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously there is no death don't never look at a dead body because this just isn't done so there are people who have never seen a dead body and if it's not a close relative you would not be able to see a dead body because the civilization needs to hide death because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form death is the most

dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it and so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too if you saw it over a period of 3000 years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes oh or you would see a human being being born somebody showed me a clip apparently it was from an ad from some country it takes one minute a baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time but as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming and the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave and it says underneath life is short now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I don't know I think they were selling beer or something like that but that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact and this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate at all the color blue wouldn't exist now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there is something that is different so I just give you this to consider not to think about, to consider there is something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless and the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you are aware of the formless in yourself but you and the formless are ultimately one so when you say you are aware of the formless you are already making a little mistake that is created by language what it really is that you are more fully yourself you are more aware of yourself not as two, but as one you become more self-aware awareness becomes aware of itself and there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking later we may have some more questions in the now sometimes I am aware of expanding what is this? it seems to be awareness itself if I am aware of awareness, duality which am I? good question I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it but that's not how it is it's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object but really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms but what does that mean?

who is becoming aware of awareness? the language that we use here creates the illusion of duality so it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself no duality the awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself and that is a miraculous beautiful incredible thing what traditionally has been called self-realization becoming aware awareness becoming aware of itself as simple stillness but every word reduces it again to something that is far greater and of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped

as the questioner mentions expanding you are no longer trapped your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form that's the incarnation the incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless and so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times and they say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up until you realize who you are beyond form and that is true you are born again and again but I want to make it not something that I want you to believe in but to make it true in your experience and to make it true in your experience all you need to look at is today how you reincarnate today now how does that happen?

how do I reincarnate today? I thought it just happens once in a lifetime you know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians and the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again and again how do you reincarnate today? and how many times do you reincarnate today?

every time you lose yourself in a thought or an emotion or something that happens out there which also of course you experience as thought and emotion let's say you lose yourself in a situation this is important, you must deal with this ok, what's going on here? and then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation oh, this is awful, you must do something whatever it is you identify with a form every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely there is a sense of self in it it's unconscious of course your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with a form of that thought or the emotion and so you are completely incarnated in the form that arises in your life and so humans go through life not knowing not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times they lose themselves continuously in forms they react to the forms around them they are totally in the reaction there is not an awareness in the background of ok, this is what's going on so there is no space there is only form there is no stillness there is only noise and that means being compulsively reincarnating every day many times and even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about if you were talking out loud the voice in your head that you identify with everybody would recognize it as insane but then on the other hand I don't know what if I do that I wonder what happens oh that would be dreadful I just hope that oh no, I hadn't thought of that and you reincarnate continuously into some new thought forms and so of course that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again and it doesn't mean you reject all forms some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension they say don't even look at anything beautiful because it's not going to be around for very long it's all dissolving already don't even look at the flower certainly don't, they tell the monks never look at a beautiful woman you must not look and so they go because you would reincarnate in many ways you lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous so a monk mustn't even he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous he puts it on the table and she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact now the idea behind it may be a good one that you

mustn't lose yourself in form and yet to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction all beauty is dust because whatever I look upon is already dissolving the flower that looks beautiful today, tomorrow will be gone with it and so in some traditions the entire world of form is rejected completely now occasionally that seems to work mostly it doesn't but here and there, some people realize this even within that tradition but that probably doesn't have anything to do with the traditions, they would have realized even if they were sitting in an office they were ready so it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure it may work it works if there is a human being there who can who embodies the two dimensions who embodies the awakened state, then it can work in many cases there is no human being there is only the tradition and then usually it doesn't get you there so the form not rejecting forms outright I work with to see that in every form something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are and that is not something you can think about it is if you anything that you look upon and you are still enough or listen to the bird whatever it may be anything that you can be with in stillness so that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived then you sense that that essence that you know sense yourself to be is also there in that being and even in inanimate objects even a table has being has presence some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too but this is not what I recommend here all you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look the moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is you don't know at all it remains totally unknown and mysterious just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know you just have a thought in your head or a sound comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is and then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label you hit the label and then you are stuck oh that's a table, ok what's the next thing you never can go deeper into anything you only hit one label after another and therefore it's always a search because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says ok, I've done that, I know what that is where is the next thing there is this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you and that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next and you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment ok because they are used they are addicted to the next thing some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally only on the surface of things lacking completely in depth so now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought but thought is far removed it's an abstract for many people to become present when they realize oh, I'm lost I'm lost in some problem some world of problems where is the problem now and they wake up and the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them they hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts and suddenly they look at the floor the hand, the table the light and in the

looking there is a stillness in fact the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there is always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions there is always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness and then the mind interprets it and labels it but if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it and then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there dead and then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there is a moment of pure listening and then after two seconds the mind says something oh, that must be a black bird or what's the name of I can't remember gone or whatever the mind says about it so if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness whether it's auditory or visual tactile smelling, tasting even relatively undeveloped senses from contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there is no labeling there is the stillness and the aliveness and if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer you don't need to automatically label it and so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster it's always fast but you didn't know it and so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands so to speak everything is so to speak about stillness the stillness in you expands and then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive passively perceiving but also bringing it into activity that that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows into also into what you do so that you notice you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment no, you are just present with so there is a stillness to what you perceive and there is a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple walking across the room opening a window turning on the tap feeling the water listening to the water looking out of the window in the morning you open the curtains and why? it's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no, not another grey day no, just let it be and then there is immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you immediately put a label on it so you stay with things a little longer and that depth is your own depth and the depths there, they are really one the things of the world are no longer experienced just as a surface phenomenon but as alive because the depth is the aliveness also in you and so this is the shift that is happening to you is that you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations and you break the continuity of your story then intelligence comes in more and more also love because the only way love can come into your life is through space not through form love has no form and again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love not realizing that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other which is the recognition of yourself in the other and that is

inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is and if form still arises in your mind, recognize it's only a thought it's not who that human being is and then what beauty if you can recognize the formless in form first you can recognize it in natural things very easily, much more easily because natural things are less challenging than humans humans were natural once but now they have become whatever the world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more and then gradually you bring it into human relationships easy with humans you meet for the first time let them be and as you're listening vital to be able to listen to another human it doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen, we're only listening almost as an analogy there is a field of attention of still attention that flows out towards that human being one could say you give him or her space and then that person may be speaking words arise in the space but you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come you are there as a field of aware presence and then words may come out of your mouth suddenly and that's very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated to be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen so some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field every cell of the body is present as you listen then you are because humans can be very challenging they want because they are dominated by mind they want you to contribute to their mental structures the drama, whatever it is their pain body may be active everybody here probably knows about pain body which is another way of identifying with form the old emotion that arises slight trigger triggers pain body a pain body episode pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past human suffering, human pain that hasn't gone away that is partly personal and partly collective humanity ultimately in the larger sense is all just human pain it's not ultimately personal at all and that is a little entity energetic entity that lives in you sometimes dormant and sometimes active and sometimes half dormant half asleep with one eye open waiting for an opportunity just for a trigger so that it can come up and the trigger could be a remark your partner makes are you accusing me of being... no I didn't say that yes you did and then we start the drama that awakens the partner's pain body that's supposed to happen they feed each other you totally reincarnate into old pain you live it it lives through you not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation and you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract entity is in your mind and you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife you are reincarnating at this very moment I must get back to my meditation I don't meditate an hour a day I'll have to reincarnate again and again while you are doing it now oh so this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain and it pretends to be you you identify with it it occupies your entire space and you feed on the other person's reaction and you love it when I say you I mean the pain body at that moment there is a mistaking

the pain body for who you are that's reincarnation and then finally it subsides and then the next episode will be in a week's time just like the soap operas or it will feed on your mind if you have no partner it will feed on your thinking how dreadful my life is what he did to me, she did to me they did to me the world politicians, people whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought the pain body loves it the pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry and it's a little entity, an energy form and all that is required is for you to see, to recognize it then you don't reincarnate into it anymore and even if you were reincarnated it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening that means some of your consciousness has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness before it was totally trapped in the form and then when you suddenly see what's happening, that means what's happened there some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching and there you are, the angry entities screaming oh, look at that and then it can't go on for that much longer because when there's awareness there presence which is simply the still watcher then it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness, it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself so then it quickly subsides it goes, hmmm ok well, that was good, at least I woke up in the middle of it sometimes you wake up afterwards, there it was too late but it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier and then next time it comes there it is and you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body just a tiny thing going wrong somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event, and that's because the pain body was waiting for something so shining the light of attention of consciousness on it is all that's needed, then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the old cycle, it's always the same always the same if you're not present in 30 years time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband or it may be a new wife and a new husband but it'll be the same and the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get a divorce finally I can't live with this pain body anymore I mean the one that I live with you still have your own and so you get divorced and say okay, now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body, who's conscious and then you meet somebody who looks conscious they've done spiritual work for 25 years and then you start living together and within about 4 weeks you will encounter an aspect to that person that wasn't supposed to be there so that's the challenge of the pain body whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there relationships are a good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal but if the pain body doesn't have a relationship it'll just use your mind that works too so watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain collective human pain on this planet built up over many many thousands of years and really all that your pain body is or it looks personal it's really human pain although something in your so called personal life may have added to it but really it is basically impersonal just as the

movement of thought is basically impersonal the emotions are human emotions the thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind and people think that's me but it is impersonal it's just that when you identify it it gives the illusion of being personal of being a person there you are being thought by the collective mind and so well where is the personal then? the strange thing is stillness isn't personal either presence stillness is not personal and yet it is essentially the beingness that you are but it's not personal personal means a little thing it is me and the others so ultimately there is nothing personal neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the consciousness arises is not personal either and yet the essence of who you are the I am that is nothing to do with person but it gets mixed up with the personal the forms that the person identifies with that make up the person as you know person the word comes from Latin it means persona the mask that you wear these are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans as long as you are identified with mind and emotion you play the roles that are personal you play the script in your mind the conditioning of your mind again and again and again born again and again and again until you've had enough and then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails and the readiness comes to step out of that that's the end of reincarnation before we have a few questions there may not be any questions left that would be good too can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening in other words aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens and then all that's left is spaciousness presence form and formless so even while you listen to the form, which is the sound follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness that is death too when the sound slowly dies down when I ring this bell again after the Royal Air Force has passed follow the sound until it disappears that means the sound dies death means a form is dissolving dissolves and then what's left is formless consciousness you can do the same with your breath that's an old meditation method the simplest one one of the simplest doesn't really give you time to observe your breath the Buddha recommended that it's perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says, I must get better at observing my breath when you observe how your breath moves out the end of the out-breath is also a little death and there's a moment of stillness any ending is helpful in that way because any ending is the ending of any form and it's always some kind of death when you accept it fully it's an opening into the formless even the ending of our little retreat can be like that because that too is a form and you could say, oh, what a pity this form is dissolving and you want to hang on to the form a recipe for unhappiness not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form so the more you welcome all the endings in your life goodbye formless way form is going the more the formless is there in your life the egoic entity works the opposite way it hates, it wants to think oh no, I want to keep this but it's going going, gone everything if you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching that can be very beautiful too to feel, to accept that, but not as a thought oh, I'm going to die soon no, let it push you into

being present just that if any questions arise please ask one person there I think the microphone will travel to you

[Speaker 2] (3:30:39 - 3:30:41)

you use a lot of

[Speaker 3] (3:30:41 - 3:31:04)

humor in your a lot of laughter in your presentation and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence can you speak about that?

[Speaker 1] (3:31:07 - 3:51:25)

the humor arises spontaneously when you look at really whenever this humor arises we're looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence which is the identification with form is a form of madness and when you see it in your own life the seeing is free in that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form there is a spontaneous relaxation and that produces the laughter so it's enormously liberating the more you laugh at the world of form not in a malicious way but in a free way to see the forms do not they pretend all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious the world wants to be taken every situation says I'm so serious and if you have no inauspiciousness then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious and so the absolute seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless and that means laughter arises more frequently even in relatively unlikely situations and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion it's sometimes when I used to see people individually they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story at that time I just let them tell me the story and sometimes while they were telling and sometimes it was a very unhappy story very unhappy and sometimes while I was listening there was a smile on my face and it just I don't know how it got there laughter and sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said what are you smiling about are you laughing at me no and then I found it hard to explain there was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain so I found it hard to explain why the smile was there not smiling at anything they said smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them underneath the story I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine I recognized the dimension in you where you are never touched by the unhappy story who you are and because I recognized that the smile came and so but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them it wasn't taken all that seriously anymore just as my own story lost its seriousness it continued in some way playing itself out but it wasn't serious business anymore it doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form it doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things no, not at all there is you still here as this form

identity you still carry a form also so you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form and yet that is one aspect of compassion that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is suffering and I've been through it I know the suffering so there is the empathy on the level of form of suffering but there is also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me, in you it's one and there come the two aspects of compassion on the one hand we share being trapped in this form seemingly on the other hand we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence where we are already free and you bring the two together and that's true compassion because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps you weep also you may weep but underneath the weeping there is joy the joy that knows of the formless that knows that you are in your essence indestructible not as an abstract idea but as a feeling realization so to speak so humor is a wonderful thing and I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers had a lot of humor too all the teachers did and just the disciples later on said oh we mustn't put that joke in that doesn't look serious enough beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious because even the Zen Masters who look dreadfully serious they only look like that there's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people so they just look like that but if you look into their eyes or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen Master you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor there is a softness also and there is a gentle smile hidden somewhere there and then of course you have the beautiful image traditionally all Buddha images have a slight smile this is the Buddha smile a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself knowing the essence of being and then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the fat Buddha the fat Buddha there, wonderful there's this man with a huge belly toothless in many cases or just one tooth left and his belly is huge and he's continuously laughing laughter laughter and many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also and it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem just look at him laughter and he's laughing not at you he's laughing not because he despises the world or he's callous towards human suffering he's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless and so it's a wonderful image you can also practice a laughing meditation I haven't done that yet laughter laughter that frees up a lot of rigid structures inside but here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful ok, one there and then we go there oh thank you can a fool realize his enlightenment thank you can a form realize a fool oh thank you wonderful question laughter there are some wonderful images fool is a very ancient mythological figure the tarot card of the fool and so on now by fool let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking but has not arrived at compulsive thinking laughter and in that sense that human being is already enlightened because it's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here but that state of not yet trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state one could say he doesn't need

enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened in modern contemporary mythology which is films laughter there is a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live first of all he doesn't have an ego everything that comes everything he needs naturally comes to him his life unfolds naturally, he doesn't struggle for anything everything comes at the right moment and he achieves he even does great things but never says I did that because the I hasn't arisen yet he has to go to Vietnam and even there wherever he goes he is a force for good even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam he saves many people and he is a great hero and he doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that he just explains that's what happened, I did that and so on and so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there, for us we can't go back there he doesn't really need to go through thinking he is fine it seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations, remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and they don't need the Buddha they already just as an animal there are some dogs or cats that I sometimes meet in some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being the old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway, they are too old and so they go around and they are just completely there and the old dog there are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within the form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there this is not our destiny to return we are all, we have been or are, or most of us halfway stuck in the human mind so there is no way of going back, we cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything so in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought and there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought means he is no longer trapped in thinking to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking didn't have to, for some reason consciousness flowered there, through that form and that's beautiful for us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again yes one could say, but yet we don't become forest gum there is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought there is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state it's a regaining of the natural state but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of the myth of the golden age that exists in India in almost every civilization you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily the world was a kind of paradise, you have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the Bible so there must be an ancient truth there there is a natural state that humans lost those humans who didn't lose it, don't need it they are fine but it is the destiny the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to

regain it and that's where we are and so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in thinking when you live aligned to the present moment don't compulsively label things no longer a walking story you become quite simple the need to be special falls away you become very ordinary very ordinary because you don't need to project a sense of specialness anymore and find attempt to find your identity in there, because you already you are in touch with the preciousness that is the essence of who you are, so you don't need to seek a specialness in form anymore what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are to become ordinary you have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages the whole Tao Te Ching the Chinese book of wisdom is all an expression of ordinariness to be ordinary not to project yourself wanting, needing to be someone but happy to be no one and that looks quite foolish from the point of view of our civilization and people may look upon you as nobody and that's wonderful the only regret is not really regret I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more is the projection of specialness whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody doubted that I was ordinary well, a few of you said you must go and see him he's so ordinary just to be just to live with the present moment see what nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now that's all you ever have to do it's pretty ordinary just this the famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water it's expressed in that it's a very profound Zen saying this is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence chopping wood carrying water two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that in our case it will be something else most people, well, don't chop wood well, perhaps some people still do it is beautiful to be just just that whatever you happen to be doing at this moment there's no more than this moment chopping wood ah carrying water just that peace aliveness no interference of mind that says how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood if I don't do something now I'll still be stuck in 10 years time chopping wood the illusion of time is back here but only on the external not in here on the external level the clock keeps ticking or whatever modern clocks do this is not the end there is no end but this is not the end even on the level of form so after our little break I will meet with you again here in about 30 so called minutes and we will sit together just in silence for a little while unless something else happens thank you